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Conference Abstract

Advancing Collections Management with the Netherlands Biodiversity Data Services

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Abstract

By the summer of 2015 Naturalis Biodiversity Center had come to the end of a five-year digitization programme that aimed at digitally disclosing the entire collection of, at the time, 38 million objects. The result was a vast amount of collections data being made available to researchers, collection managers and the public. In order to utilize these data to their full extent, Naturalis has in the past few years been developing the Netherlands Biodiversity Data Services (NBDS). These services “speak” not only to our digitized collection, but to other sources of information as well and lets us query and use these data in a centralized manner.

While the NBDS open up a lot of possibilities for i.e. communication, exhibition, education, policy making, etc., a very important field for its application is collection management. Instead of managing (at this point) 41 million individual objects, the NBDS could provide insight into custom aggregations of data to further professionalize decision making. Not only detailed information about taxonomy, gathering events and collection history can be provided, one can also think about quantifying use, conservation status, change in collection-size over time, etc. Some examples of application for collections management will be given during the presentation and illustrated with a collections dashboard.

Even though we have made great progress in digitization, certain parts of our collection are not digitized to specimen-level and to various degrees of completeness, parts of the physical collection are not identified to species level, not all data are consistent or properly

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validated, etc. But instead of this limiting the applicability of the NBDS, the data service can be used as a tool to pinpoint these areas for improvement and to allow collection management to properly address and prioritize them. This presentation ultimately deals with the potential the NBDSNBA has for managing collections, both physical as digital, and enhancing their quality and value.

Keywords

collections management, api, dashboard, collections data

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